

POPULATION AND GROWTH

The primary reason that the United States Census Bureau conducts the decennial Census is to count the nation's residents so that districts for the federal House of Representatives can be apportioned among the states. This has been required by the Constitution since 1790.

Population is also the most basic of demographic measures that communities like Bellevue need in order to plan in an effective way. Population dynamics profoundly affect—and are affected by—every aspect of our human culture and society, including household and family formation, healthcare and longevity, migration, education, land use, environment and natural resources, transportation systems, the economy, and governmental policies. Of course, while local population trends in Bellevue are linked to demographic dynamics at national and international levels, factors within the city and the region also play an important role.

This chapter describes the growth of Bellevue's population as measured by the Census, and compares Bellevue's population growth to that of other cities in the region, as well as to the state and nation as a whole. Policy and planning implications for Bellevue are discussed at the end of this chapter.

Changes in population size have three direct sources: fertility, mortality, and migration. The Census counts the population and includes questions on residents' migration history. The Census also includes questions about age of the population, but does not directly measure fertility and mortality. Because this report is based on information from the Census, it does not cover fertility and mortality except in a contextual way to help explain demographic trends revealed by the Census. Migration trends will be examined in the Housing and Residential Patterns Chapter of the report.

Bellevue's Population and Growth

Bellevue's population was counted at 109,569 in the national Census conducted in April 2000. This places Bellevue as the fifth most populous city in Washington state. This is down from fourth in 1990. (Between 1990 and 2000, Vancouver's population eclipsed Bellevue's, as Vancouver doubled its population, largely through annexations.¹)

Ranking of Top 10 Cities in Washington by Total Population 2000		
City	Total Population	Rank
Seattle (King Co.)	563,374	1
Spokane (Spokane Co.)	195,629	2
Tacoma (Pierce Co.)	193,556	3
Vancouver (Clark Co.)	143,560	4
BELLEVUE (King Co.)	109,569	5
Everett (Snohomish Co.)	91,488	6
Federal Way (King Co.)	83,259	7
Kent (King Co.)	79,524	8
Yakima (Yakima Co.)	71,845	9
Bellingham (Whatcom Co.)	67,171	10

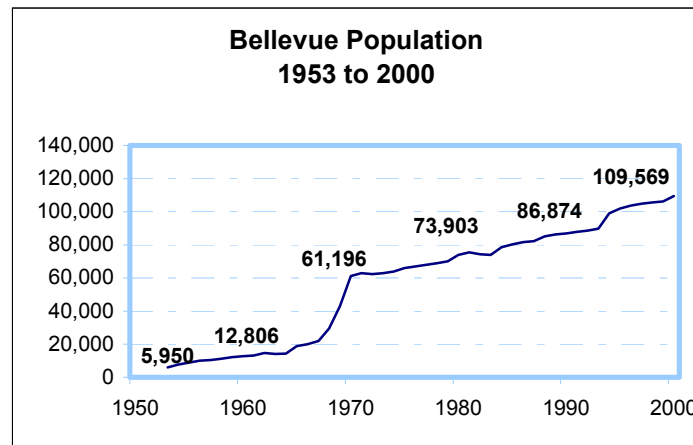
¹For trends in the ranking of Washington cities by population since the year 2000, see <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/2002Pop/RANK2002.pdf>.

Bellevue has the second largest population of cities within King County, which is Washington state's most populous county. King County is also the twelfth most populous county in the United States.

Between 1990 and 2000, Bellevue's population grew by 22,695 persons or 26.1 percent (from 86,874 to 109,569). In raw numbers, Bellevue had the third highest increase in population among cities within the Central Puget Sound region between 1990 and 2000. (Seattle and Kent, respectively, added the largest and second largest number of persons.) A map of Bellevue is shown on page 11.

An important component of Bellevue's population growth in the 1990s was annexation of portions of unincorporated King County. Approximately half of Bellevue's population growth that occurred in the 1990s was from annexations while the other half was from in-migration and births.

The chart to the right shows trends in Bellevue's population between the City's incorporation in 1953 and the national Census conducted in 2000. The table below shows how fast Bellevue's population has grown in each decade since the City was formed.

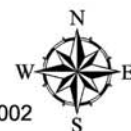
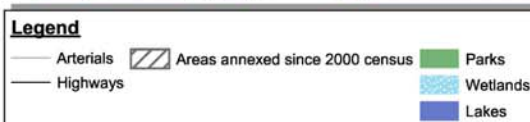
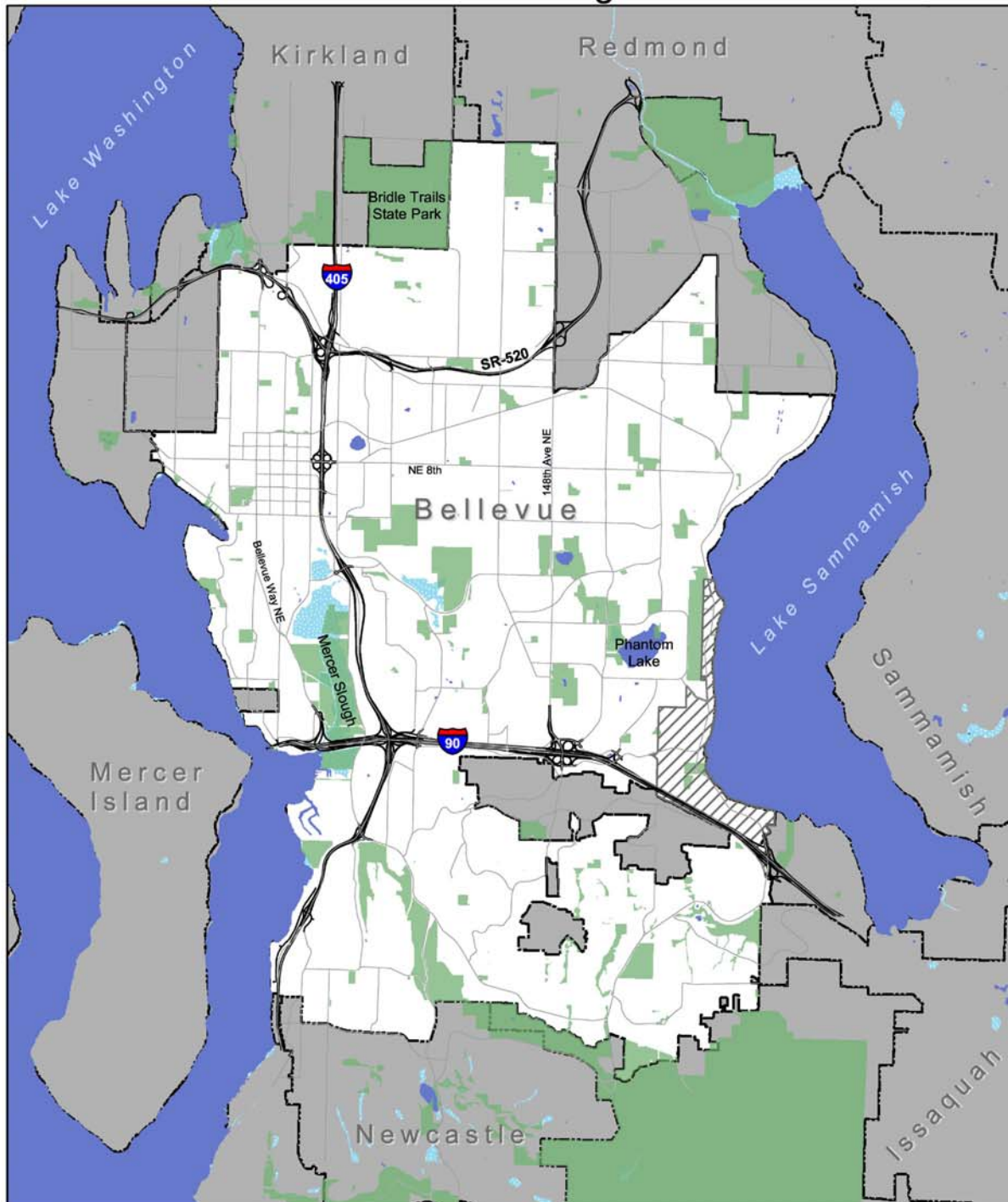


Annexation has accounted for slightly more than half (52 percent) of Bellevue's overall population growth from the City's incorporation in 1953 until 2000. During this time, the area within the City's boundaries grew from 4.7 square miles to 30.6 square miles. Major annexations were the main driver behind the steep increases in Bellevue's population in the 1960s, when approximately 78 percent of growth during that decade was due to annexations. After the annexations that occurred in the 1990s and early part of the current decade, only a small fraction of the area within the City's ultimate potential annexation area remains to be annexed. Given this, the growth rate of Bellevue's population will very likely slow in the future, as virtually all new growth will be from births and in-migration rather than expanding city boundaries.²

Bellevue Rate of Population Growth by Decade 1953 to 2000	
1953 to 1960	115%
1960 to 1970	378%
1970 to 1980	21%
1980 to 1990	18%
1990 to 2000	26%

² With the annexation of West Lake Sammamish in 2001, the area within Bellevue's city limits reached 31.5 square miles. The full extent of the Potential Annexation area is 32.6 square miles. Bellevue's population in the year 2002 is estimated at 117,000.

Bellevue and Surrounding Jurisdictions



December 20, 2002

Population and Growth – Regional and National Comparisons

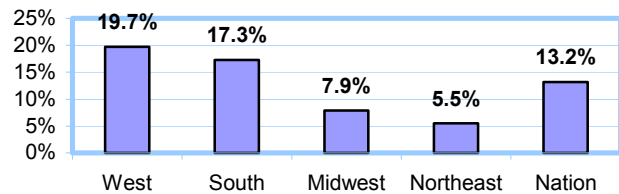
The United States' population as a whole grew by 13.2 percent between 1990 and 2000, from about 249 million to 281 million. Nationally, the West and the South grew the fastest and much more quickly than the Midwest and Northeast.

In addition, medium-sized metropolitan areas—those with populations of 2.0 million to 5.0 million, like the Central Puget Sound—grew more quickly than other metropolitan areas³. Nationally, medium-sized satellite cities also grew faster in the 1990s than did larger central urban cities.⁴

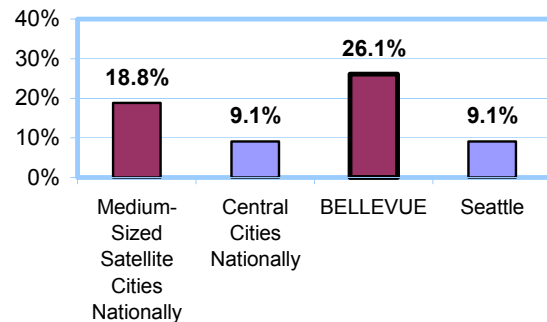
Consistent with these national trends, Bellevue and other cities surrounding Seattle grew more quickly than did Seattle. Also, outlying cities to the South and East of Bellevue also generally grew more quickly than did Bellevue.

Between 1990 and 2000, the population in the Central Puget Sound region (which is composed of King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties) increased by 527,000 persons—slightly more than half of Washington state's overall growth.

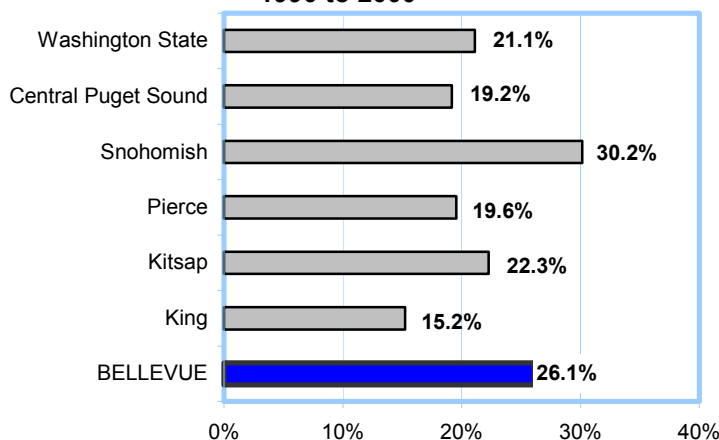
**U.S. Population Growth by Region
1990 to 2000**



**Growth of Satellite & Central Cities
Nationally and Locally
1990 to 2000**



**Population Growth
Bellevue, Washington State and Region
1990 to 2000**



In the 1990s, the population of King County grew by 15.2 percent or 229,729 persons. King County's population grew somewhat more slowly than the population in the Central Puget Sound region as a whole and only about half as quickly as Snohomish County's population, which had the highest growth rate in the four-county region. The population of the Central Puget Sound region increased slightly more slowly than the overall population of Washington state.

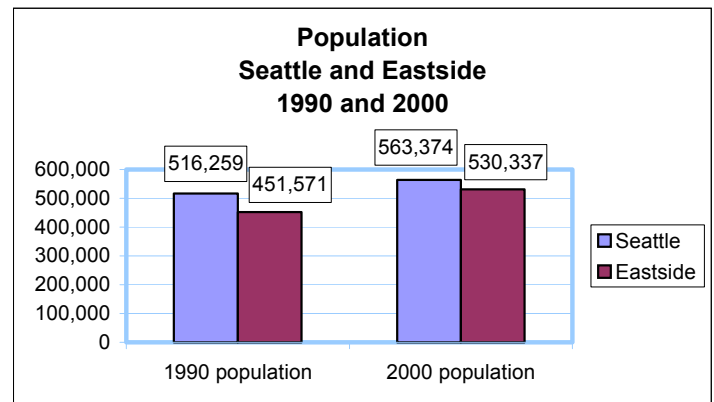
³ Source: the Census Bureau's "Population Change and Distribution Report" for 1990 to 2000

⁴ Source: The Brookings Institution Survey Series, "Demographic Change in Medium-Sized Cities: Evidence from the 2000 Census," p. 5, July 2002.

Population and Population Growth Rates King County, Central Puget Sound Region, and Washington State 1990 to 2000				
	1990 Population	2000 Population	Numeric Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000
BELLEVUE	86,874	109,569	22,695	26.1%
King County	1,507,305	1,737,034	229,729	15.2%
Kitsap County	189,731	231,969	42,238	22.3%
Pierce County	586,203	700,820	114,617	19.6%
Snohomish County	465,628	606,024	140,396	30.2%
Central Puget Sound Region (combination of four counties above)	2,748,867	3,275,847	526,980	19.2%
Washington State	4,866,663	5,894,121	1,027,458	21.1%

In the 1990s Bellevue's population grew by 26.1 percent. Not counting population added by annexations (i.e., assuming the same City boundaries for 1990 and 2000), Bellevue's population grew by 13.2 percent. Given that the boundaries of the Washington state and King County were static between 1990 and 2000, we can conclude that Bellevue's "real" rate of population growth was somewhat lower than the rate of population growth in the county as a whole and substantially lower than the rates of growth for the Central Puget Sound region and the state as a whole.⁵ In an interesting coincidence, the rate of real population growth in Bellevue is the same as the 13.2 percent rate of growth in the nation as a whole.

Within the Puget Sound region, the numbers of residents in traditional population centers have been growing less quickly than the number of residents in other places. As part of this pattern, the proportions of King County's population contributed by the Eastside and by the South King County have grown since 1970, while the percentage contributed by Seattle has fallen. In 1990 the Eastside⁶ had a population that was 87.5 percent that of Seattle's. (A map showing the boundaries of the "Eastside," as defined in this report, can be found

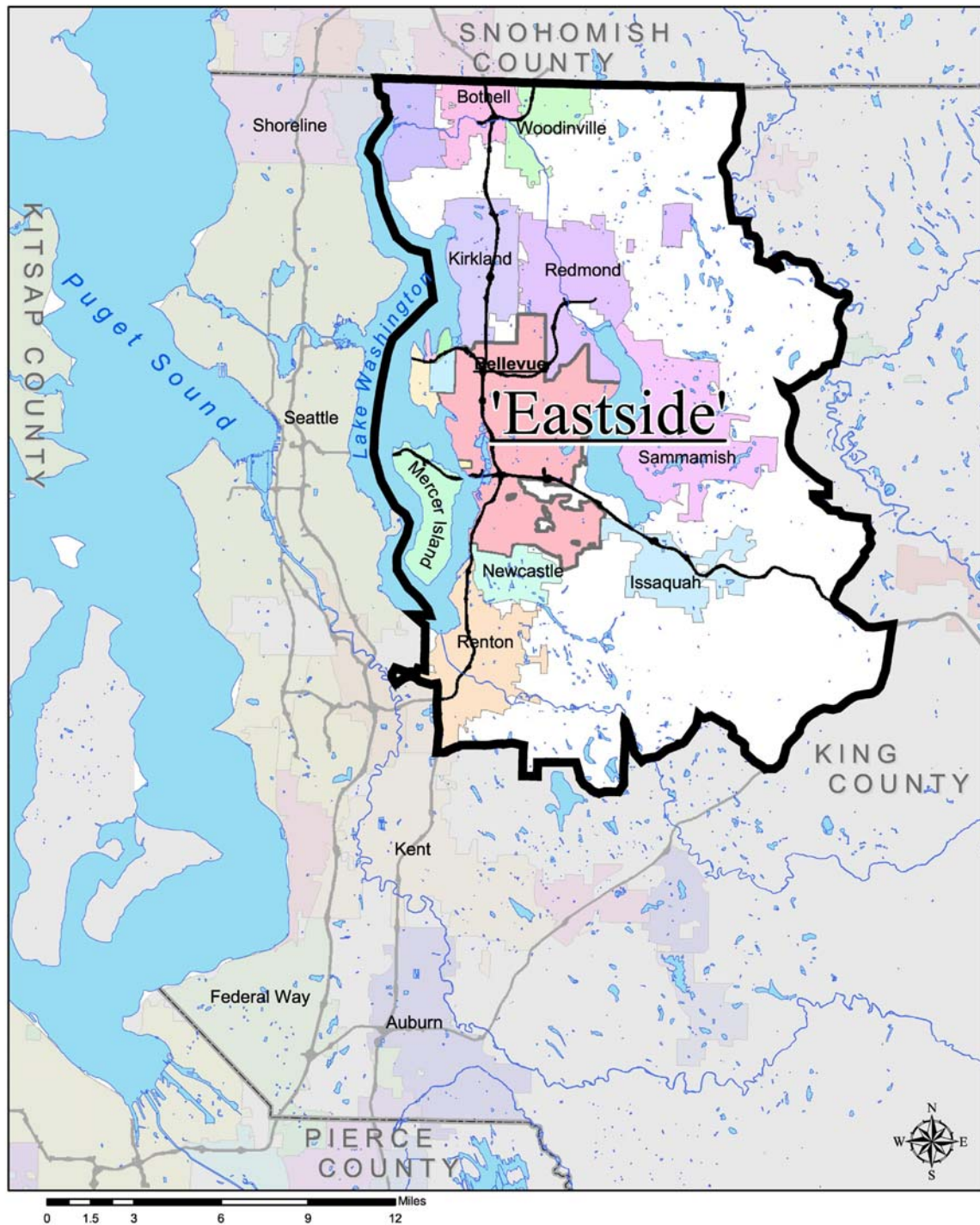


⁵ "Real" population growth is total population growth minus the new population brought into cities by annexations.

⁶ Unless otherwise specified in the report text, "the Eastside" in this report is defined in terms of Census subdivisions for King County. Specifically, the "Eastside" in these reports consists of the East Seattle Subdivision in combination with the Issaquah Plateau Subdivision. The city with the largest populations in the East Seattle Subdivision is Bellevue, followed by Renton (which is partly in this subdivision), Redmond, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Kenmore, and Bothell (the last two of which are partly in this subdivision). The cities with the largest populations in the Issaquah Subdivision are Sammamish and Issaquah (both of which are located partly in this subdivision and partly in the East Seattle Subdivision). See map on page 14 for details.

on this page.) In 2000, the Eastside's population was 94.1 percent as large as Seattle's. In the 1990s, the population of the Eastside grew almost twice as fast as Seattle: the Eastside's growth rate was 17.4 percent compared to Seattle's growth rate of 9.1 percent. Also, in the 1990s, the Eastside added more residents in numerical terms than did Seattle.

King County's "Eastside" as defined in this Report



Population and Population Growth Rates King County, Seattle and the Eastside 1990 to 2000				
	1990 Population	2000 Population	Numeric Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000
King County	1,507,319	1,737,034	229,715	15.2%
Seattle	516,259	563,374	47,115	9.1%
Eastside	451,571	530,337	78,766	17.4%

Analysis of trends over the last three decades reveals that rates of population growth peaked in the 1980s and declined somewhat within both King County and the Central Puget Sound region as a whole in the 1990s. In contrast, the overall growth rate in Washington state dipped in the 1980s then accelerated again in the 1990s.

In Bellevue, the population growth rate slowed in the 1980s compared to the growth rate of 1970s, but then increased in the 1990s, exceeding the growth rate of the 1970s and 1980s. The increased growth rate in the 1990s is largely attributable to annexation.

King County cities analyzed for this report varied widely in their rates of population increase between 1990 and 2000. In many cities in addition to Bellevue, annexations contributed to population growth during the 1990s. This helps account for the variation in growth rates within King County cities. For example, none of the 9.1 percent population increase in Seattle during the 1990s was due to annexation, but close to two-thirds of the 109.5 percent population increase in Kent during that decade came from annexation. With slightly less than half of Bellevue's 26.1 percent population increase coming from annexations, Bellevue's rate of growth from annexation during the 1990s was moderate in comparison to many other King County cities.

When population growth from all sources—including annexations—is analyzed, one finds that Bellevue grew much faster than Seattle and Kirkland and somewhat faster than Renton, but slightly slower than Redmond and much slower than Kent. When

Population Growth in Selected Cities Bellevue and Comparison Cities in King County 1990 to 2000			
	Population 2000	Population Change (%) 1990-2000	Real Population Change (%) 1990-2000
King County	1,737,034	15.2%	15.2%
BELLEVUE	109,569	26.1%	13.2%
Kent	79,524	109.5%	41.4%
Kirkland	45,054	12.5%	12.5%
Redmond	45,256	26.4%	25.7%
Renton	50,052	20.1%	18.6%
Sammamish	34,104	N/A	N/A
Seattle	563,374	9.1%	9.1%

King County Cities with Highest Real Growth Rates (Excluding Annexations) 1990 to 2000			
	Population 2000	Population Change (%) 1990-2000	Real Population Change (%) 1990-2000
Algona	2,460	45.2%	45.2%
Black Diamond	3,970	179.2%	74.1%
Bothell	30,150	144.2%	50.7%
Carnation	1,893	52.3%	48.7%
Duvall	4,616	66.6%	64.0%
Enumclaw	11,116	53.8%	53.8%
Issaquah	11,212	44.0%	42.7%
Kent	79,524	109.5%	41.4%
North Bend	4,746	84.1%	84.1%

annexations are excluded and “real” growth among cities is compared, Bellevue is seen to have grown slower than all of the other comparison cities analyzed except Seattle and Kirkland.⁷

Between 1990 and 2000, the share of the Eastside’s population contributed by Bellevue went from 19.2 percent to 20.7 percent. (Without the persons added to Bellevue’s population by annexation, Bellevue’s population would have grown more slowly than the Eastside population as a whole, but still more quickly than Seattle.)

Downtown Bellevue was one the most rapidly growing census tracts in all of King County.⁸ However, when whole cities and towns are considered as opposed to smaller census tracts, the most dramatic rates of growth in King County—other than those due to annexations—were commonly seen in the outer eastern and southern fringes of King County, in cities such as Duvall, Enumclaw, and North Bend. Bothell, and Kent also had high rates of “real” population growth in addition to annexations that also contributed a substantial portion of their growth.

KEY FINDINGS

Population and Growth

- Bellevue’s population of 109,569 placed it as the fifth most populous city in Washington state and the second most populous city in King County after Seattle.
- Bellevue’s population grew by 26.1 percent between 1990 and 2000.
- Annexation contributed about half of Bellevue’s population growth between 1990 and 2000. This is about the same overall percentage contributed by annexation since the City’s incorporation in 1953.
- Bellevue’s population will likely increase more slowly in the future because only a small fraction of the City’s ultimate potential annexation area remains to be annexed.
- Within the Puget Sound region the number of residents in traditional population centers such as Seattle have been growing more slowly than other places. As part of this trend, the east side of King County grew more quickly than Seattle did in the 1990s. Bellevue’s population increased more quickly than Seattle’s did, but less rapidly than the population in cities and towns on the eastern and southern fringes of King County.

⁷ The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has compiled a table showing population change from annexation as a percentage of total population growth between 1990 and 2000 for all cities in the four-county Central Puget Sound Region. This is available on their website: <http://www.psrc.org/datapubs/pubs/trends/d6trend.pdf>. The PSRC website also contains a wealth of other regional data from the 2000 Census. Another useful website is that of the Washington State Office of Financial Management: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov>.

⁸ See Appendix B: “Change in Population” in August 2001 report by the Puget Sound Regional Council entitled *2000 Census P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data*, http://psrc.org/datapubs/census2000/pl94-171/pl_report.pdf. The second of Bellevue’s series of 2000 Census reports will provide detailed comparisons of data for tracts within the city.

Potential Implications of Population Characteristics for Bellevue

As a city of over 100,000 residents, Bellevue's importance in the region will likely be enhanced as an economic, employment, cultural, and retail center serving an increasing number of residents in the Eastside. For this to occur, Bellevue will need to view itself in an increasingly regional way and ensure its ability to serve and appeal to those in other nearby cities. New opportunities for enhanced economic development throughout the region will also be associated with the increased numbers of consumers.

Bellevue is maturing. While Bellevue's population will continue to grow in numbers, the rate of population growth in the city will likely slow given that only a small fraction of the area within the City's ultimate potential annexation area remains to be annexed. Though the rate of population growth will slow, population density in Bellevue will likely increase in areas where this is allowed by zoning and other development regulations.

Continued increases in the city's population and population density will continue to bring both challenges and opportunities—both of which will require proactive and responsive planning. These include:

- Greater demands on local and regional utility and transportation infrastructure. These demands are likely to cause more congestion on roadways both regionally and locally, and increased pressure on scarce resources such as water supply.
- Greater demand for many City services, such as utilities, transportation, parks, human services, police, and fire, although the rate at which some services must ramp up to accommodate new residents will decrease.
- Continued pressures on open space and habitat from development and redevelopment. Bellevue's critical areas policies, which the City is currently updating, will be essential in limiting these impacts.
- A variety of opportunities to tap efficiencies and quality of life improvements that can be associated with increased population density—such as economically viable shops and schools within walking distances.